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PHOENIX REPUBLIC
14 February 1979

How Times Change...

WHAT a difference a little revolution makes.

Until the collapse of the government of the Shah of Iran, the Carter administration had naively insisted that domestic and international intelligence could be gathered without human surveillance.

Spying inside U.S. borders might trample on human rights, so the reasoning went, and spying overseas could be conducted by technological means, a euphemism for electronic eavesdropping and satellites.

Then the roof caved in, and President Carter was furious about being caught in an intelligence vacuum.

So it's back to old and proven ways.

Carter has told CIA Director Stansfield Turner that he should also rely on in-place intelligence operatives to ferret out and evaluate shifting political currents in foreign countries.

And, at home, FBI Director William H. Webster has acknowledged that the bureau is conducting surveillance of the Iranian Student Association to make certain that it and some of its militant members don't represent a threat to internal security.

It's always better to know if somebody plans to burn the barn, rather than finding out too late that the barn's on fire. □